

REMARKS

By this Amendment, Applicants amend claims 1, 2, 11, 13-15, and 17-19. Claims 1-8 and 11-20 remain currently pending.

In the final Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent 6,366,622 to Brown et al. ("Brown") in view of U.S. Patent 6,907,227 to Fujioka ("Fujioka").^{1, 2}

Applicants respectfully traverse the Section 103(a) rejection of claims 1-8 and 11-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Brown in view of Fujioka, because a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established.

To establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness based on a combination or suggestion of prior art, "Office personnel must articulate . . . a finding that the prior art included each element claimed, although not necessarily in a single prior art reference, with the only difference between the claimed invention and the prior art being the lack of actual combination of the elements in a single prior art reference." M.P.E.P. § 2143.A (8th edition, revision 6).

Independent claim 1, as amended, recites a combination including, for example, "a connected number judgment unit configured to judge whether or not the number of said slave communication devices connected currently reaches a second limited number less than said first limited number." Brown fails to teach or suggest at least these features of amended claim 1.

¹ The Office Action contains a number of statements reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicants decline to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

² Claims 9 and 10 were canceled in the Amendment filed February 8, 2008.

Brown teaches that “[a]n apparatus for use in wireless communications includes a radio, a modem and a controller integrated onto a single integrated circuit (IC). . . . The controller is coupled to the modem and includes a digital interface for external communications through which received data and data for transmission is sent, a connection state machine configured to accept commands through the digital interface and to respond to the commands by initiating a sequence, and a receive/transmit state machine configured to perform state control of the radio in response to the initiated sequence.” Brown, Abstract, emphasis added. However, Brown’s teaching of a connection state machine does not constitute “a connected number judgment unit configured to judge whether or not the number of said slave communication devices connected currently reaches a second limited number less than said first limited number,” as recited in amended claim 1 (emphasis added).

Fujioka fails to cure the deficiencies of Brown. The Office Action alleges that “Fujioka teaches [abstract] ‘Slave terminals and a master terminal are wirelessly connected according to the Bluetooth protocol. When a number of the slave terminals exceeds a predetermined number of the slave terminals for the wireless connection, the wireless connections are controlled by a predetermined set of rules. Active slave terminals are switched into inactive slave terminals according to the predetermined rules so as to efficiently use the resources in the system.’” (Office Action at 3.) Applicants respectfully disagree. Fujioka’s teaching of a single predetermined number for setup of slave terminals cannot constitute “a connected number judgment unit configured to judge whether or not the number of said slave communication devices

connected currently reaches a second limited number less than said first limited number,” as recited in amended claim 1 (emphasis added).

In fact, Fujioka explicitly states that ‘the above operation is not performed on every slave terminal but only on each slave terminal beyond the first seven slave terminals.” Fujioka, column 12, lines 47-49. Therefore, it may be possible for the Examiner to argue that Fujioka, at most, teaches Applicants’ “first limited number” used to limit the total number of connected slave device in the wireless network, a position which applicants do not concede. However, Fujioka fails to mention or suggest “a second limited number less than said first limited number,” as recited in amended claim 1.

Applicants respectfully submit that limiting the number of the slave communication devices which is simultaneously connected to the master communication device to the second limited number, which is less than the first number of a maximum number of connected device, may make it possible to promptly permit the connection of the new slave communication device without checking the total number of the slave communication devices connected currently, because even if the new slave communication device is being connected, the total number does not exceed the first limited number.

Therefore, Brown and Fujioka fail to teach all elements of amended claim 1, and a *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been established. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 103(a) rejection of amended claim 1. Because claims 2-8 depend from claim 1, claims 2-8 are also allowable for at least the same reasons stated above.

Further, dependent claims 2-8 recite additional allowable subject matter. For example, amended claim 2 recites, for example, “a waiting registration unit configured to register said slave communication device which issues said communication request, in the issued order, when the number of currently connected slave communication devices is determined to have reached said second limited number.” Brown and Fujioka also fail to teach or suggest at least these features of amended claim 2.

The Office Action alleges that “Brown in view of Fujioka teach . . . a waiting registration unit configured to register in an order said slave communication device which issues said communication request, when determined to have reached said prescribed number (see claim 1 rejection and [Brown] Column 4 Lines 15-17 ‘A piconet starts with two connected devices, such as a portable PC and cellular phone, and may grow to eight connected devices’).” (Office Action at 4.) Applicants respectfully disagree.

In the portions cited by the Examiner, Brown explicitly states that “[a] piconet starts with two connected devices, such as a portable PC and cellular phone, and may grow to eight connected devices. . . . The master unit receives the all zero Active Member for itself and thus there can be only seven active slaves in a piconet at any given time. Parked units are devices in a piconet which are synchronized but do not have Active Member addresses but can have 8-bit Passive Member addresses or be addressed with the full Bluetooth address.” Brown, column 4, lines 15-35, emphasis added.

However, Brown's description of a Bluetooth based piconet cannot constitute “a waiting registration unit configured to register said slave communication device which

issues said communication request, in the issued order, when the number of currently connected slave communication devices is determined to have reached said second limited number," as recited in amended claim 2 (emphasis added).

Therefore, Applicants also respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 103(a) rejection of dependent claims 2-8.

Further, amended independent claims 11, 13, and 17, while of different scope, recite similar features to those of amended claim 1. Amended claims 11, 13, and 17 are therefore also allowable over Brown and Fujioka for at least the same reasons stated above with respect to amended claim 1. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the Section 103(a) rejection of claims 11, 13, and 17 and of claims 12, 14-16, and 18-20, which depend from claims 11, 13, and 17, respectively.³

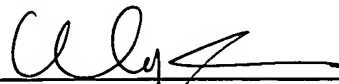
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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³ Amended claims 14 and 18 also recite similar features to those of amended claim 2 listed above.